THRIVING CITIES ENDOWMENT BRIEF

The Just and Well-Ordered

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Thriving Cities is an initiative of the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture.

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Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture

Made possible by the generous support of the Kern Family Foundation

THE TRUE
Human Knowledge

THE GOOD
Social Mores and Ethics

THE BEAUTIFUL
Aesthetics

THE PROSPEROUS
Economic Life

THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED
Political and Civil Life

THE SUSTAINABLE
The Natural Environment

COMMUNITY ENDOWMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Much like biologists think of an ecosystem as a community of living and non-living things working together in the natural world, Thriving Cities uses a framework we call “human ecology” to help us envision a city. The human ecologies of a city contain and depend upon an array of different, but fundamental endowments. Such endowments: (a) give expression to long-standing and universally-recognizable ends that are essential to human thriving (e.g., intellectual life, aesthetics, sociality, play, health and security, transcendence); (b) become actualized within specific social practices and institutional settings (e.g., universities, theaters, social media, soccer clubs, health care, and places of worship); (c) have distinctive histories that shape their present and future possibilities; and (d) interact dynamically with one another, creating both virtuous cycles when robust and healthy, and vicious cycles when depleted and weak, but also generating synergies with unintended consequences and tensions between competing goods.

The language of endowments is highly intentional. It stands in direct opposition to the language of “capital,” used by most standard and many cutting-edge approaches. Where capital denotes abstract, a-temporal, and amoral value that is at once fungible and fluid, which is to say unfixed (which is precisely the source of its conceptual strength), the language of endowments brings the dimensions of particularity and temporality back into view—endowments are the products of investments made over time and they must be maintained in the present if they are to remain available in the future. Also, attached to the language of endowments is a sense of fiduciary responsibility and obligation. Where capital functions as a medium of value and exchange irrespective of context, endowments function as a reservoir of wealth held in common—as a trust within very definite contexts. Despite its obvious strengths, the language of capital is not able to capture these essential qualities of community life, and not surprisingly, they remain empirically elusive in approaches that rely on it.

Our distinctively cultural approach, with its emphasis on the normative dimensions of common life in cities, invites us to see them in terms of six interactive (and ever-evolving) formative contexts in which we routinely see the exercise of moral agency and practical reasoning across human communities. The first three of the six endowments build on the classical ideals of “the True,” “the Good,” and “the Beautiful;” the last three are what we might call the modern ideals of “the Prosperous,” “the Well-ordered and Just,” and “the Sustainable.” Together they form some of the most recognizable horizons of the human experience.

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I. INTRODUCTION

“The Just and Well-Ordered” refers to the manner in which the institutions and practices of political and civic life contribute to or hinder the capacity of all citizens to *thrive*, in the broad sense emphasized by the Thriving Cities Project. These institutions range from local government and schools to community and neighborhood associations to interest groups and activist organizations. The Endowment also includes resources present in a community to support practices necessary for thriving. Among them are the human resources of community networks, strong leadership, and individual and group skills, as well as fiscal elements such as local tax bases and intergovernmental fund transfers. These institutions and practices suggest how frequently The Just and Well-Ordered may overlap with the other modern Endowments of “The Sustainable” and, especially, “The Prosperous” (as The Just and Well-Ordered, in particular, is more easily attained, and sustained, in an environment with adequate resources). The Endowment, though, also has an important aspirational element, critical to the concept of thriving as used in the project, which links it to the “classical” endowments of The Beautiful, The Good,” and even “The True.” These connections suggest the degree to which *all* of these Endowments are linked together in the holistic human ecologies framework posited by the Thriving Cities Project.

Perhaps more than the other Endowments, though, The Just and Well-Ordered is deeply rooted in Jane Jacobs’s idea of the organized complexity of cities. It might even be said that the management and maintenance of organized complexity is the core task of the institutions and practices encompassed by the Endowment. This reflects both the promise and the challenge of Jacobs’s concept, as complexity in the context of the metropolitan community can be a source of either vitality or chaos (and perhaps both, simultaneously). The diversity of the “organic” urban environment can facilitate the chance encounter, the unexpected idea, or the insights born of constant stimulation, and thus it can yield a dynamic and reinforcing individual and communal creativity that facilitates the fulfillment of human potential (which may itself is a way to understand what *thriving* means). Yet complexity, if not appropriately organized, can also contribute to conditions of exploitation, severe inequality, deep power disparities, or even violence and repression. This tension exists because of the difficulty of balancing the task of necessary ordering with the preservation of constitutive components of “the just”—for all who make up the metropolitan community. Questions of justice must be addressed alongside those of order if cities are to achieve, or even approach, a state of thriving.

Focusing primarily on the United States, this Endowment brief will take a largely historical approach, although it will also be informed by insights from key areas of urban social science. It will typically address issues on a metropolitan scale, emphasizing multiple physical and spatial forms of (potentially) thriving communities and avoiding sharp and often artificial distinctions between city, suburb, and region. Such distinctions will be used to impart meaning when necessary, but in general the frame of reference should be assumed to be broad, encompassing concentrations of people seeking to thrive together in multiple types of communities. Working from the perspective of history, it will identify broad patterns in the past efforts of policymakers, communities, and individuals to attain The Just and Well-Ordered. It will extend this historical overview to the present, in an effort to determine which strategies should be retained as the Thriving Cities framework is developed, which should be jettisoned, and which should be avoided at all costs.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

As indicated in the introduction, the approach taken in this Endowment brief will be primarily historical. Specifically, the brief represents an attempt to assess what is known about past efforts to secure and maintain The Just and Well-Ordered. The brief will explore what can be learned from the past in this area, as well as how these insights can be applied from the particular examples of past cases to the more general conceptual framework of this Endowment. This historically oriented focus will facilitate the identification and assessment of the multiplicity of perspectives on what this Endowment has meant, and currently means, to metropolitan communities in the United States. In addition, the brief will draw on a number of important contemporary interventions that suggest a new interest in the significance of American metropolitan areas, and cities in particular, as a driving force in twenty-first-century life.

The existing historical literature on US cities is, of course, extremely broad. A number of key conceptual categories, though, can be identified, and the broad contours of their focus and contributions can be sketched out. One of the foundational strands of the literature seeks to trace the course of urbanization in the United States, whether for a specific period or over the broad sweep of US history.[1] Early works in this area helped to establish the validity of the city, and urbanization, as categories meriting serious historical analysis. Subsequent contributions went beyond the period framework of many early studies by addressing the entire course of urban development in the United States.[2] Their wide variety of synthetic approaches suggests the difficulty of comprehensive treatments of US metropolitan history—as does the notable absence of additional such efforts over the last quarter-century.

More recent writing on the history of US urban communities has emphasized specific aspects of the metropolitan experience. This approach now has a lengthy historiographic tradition as well. One long-standing subject of discussion is urban politics. Here, for many decades, the literature emphasized the role of urban political machines in both the political organization and overall development of cities. Early strands of this literature adopted a largely progressive framework, emphasizing political corruption as a self-evident problem.[3] By the mid-twentieth century, however, a more subtle view of urban machines, and urban politics, had emerged. This approach placed politics within the context of rapid social and economic changes including urbanization, industrialization, expansion of the franchise, and immigration. Although they did not romanticize the machine or the boss, a new generation of urban historians emphasized that in the absence of strong unions, a local or national welfare function, or fully developed social policy, political machines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries often met basic human needs during periods of crisis.[4] More generally, the boss and the machine served a broad functionalist purpose of mitigating the destabilizing effects of social and economic change. In this view, the charge of corruption became a tool of elite middle-class urban residents seeking to exert, or maintain, class privileges and power. An important variant of this interpretation even emphasized the capacity of machines to spur the physical development of cities, noting how much of the basic urban infrastructure of roads, bridges, and water and sewer systems had been built under machine rule. Reflecting the growing sophistication of this literature, such scholars offered the qualification that these developmental practices sometimes served to entrench and deepen class-based divisions that limited their functionalist effectiveness.[5] Since the 1980s, urban historians have largely moved beyond the traditional boss-reformer dichotomy, developing instead new categories of analysis that have allowed the assessment of other factors and forces in urban politics.

Over subsequent decades, urban politics has often been folded into a range of issue-specific analytical frameworks for assessing the city. One of the most important of these has been the study of policy areas such as housing and urban renewal, where the intersection of race and policy has been explored in penetrating detail. Displacement, residential concentration of the poor and minorities, and stigmatization of those in public housing have too often been defining characteristics of policy in this area.[6] Recent studies have also shown that the history of housing reform remains firmly connected to present practices. In particular, a deep continuity exists between the clearance programs of the mid-century period and more recent policies such as the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI Program and Choice Neighborhoods Program, which have sought to demolish the highly concentrated housing projects of the mid-twentieth century. In both cases, a barely concealed animosity toward the poor facilitated implementation of policies that destroyed poor people's communities and disregarded their interests.[7] This housing-oriented literature overlaps with a long series of studies of mid-twentieth-century urban renewal efforts.[8] These studies detail the failure of the physically focused, design-oriented approaches to urban renewal that assumed that a city's vibrancy and order, and perhaps a degree of justice, could be restored through Modernist design and rebuilding. Such issues have not been resolved, as Section III below, "The Endowment in Context," will show.

The emphasis on failure, on racial segregation, and on missed opportunities characterizes much of the literature on urban renewal and housing in the second half of the twentieth century. The history of suburbanization, although actually a story of expansion, usually fits within this framework of decline because it is usually paired with narratives about the problems of inner cities. Kenneth Jackson's classic study *The Crabgrass Frontier* (1986) represents the earliest comprehensive work in the field, detailing both the deep-seated cultural impulses leading to suburbanization and the federal policies that not only subsidized suburban growth (specifically, racially discriminatory federal mortgage insurance practices, mortgage interest and property tax deductions, and federal highway construction) but also ensured that it would take place on a segregated basis. Although aspects of Jackson's argument have been challenged by later scholars, *The Crabgrass Frontier* remains a critical text for understanding the US metropolis—and a synthetic urban history in its own right.[9] More recent studies have re-emphasized the role of federal policies in entrenching suburban segregation, often stressing the ways in which post–World War II federal policy allowed whites to assert a market-based logic that justified continuing residential segregation even as other claims based on civil rights gained broad acceptance.[10] Another strand in the suburban history subfield emphasizes the social and cultural framework behind residential decentralization. Early studies in this vein outlined the value systems and cultural orientations that shaped not only the built environment of the suburbs but also their social makeup, while more recent work has detailed the core role played by consumption in defining the post–World War II suburb (not to mention the larger consumer economy itself[11]). Increasingly, suburban or even metropolitan history has been folded into wider narratives of US political history.[12] A key point of such approaches is that the assumed prerogatives of suburban whites, and the nascent conservative movements they helped to generate, shaped the larger political dynamics of the late twentieth century.

Deindustrialization, the loss of the manufacturing jobs that provided the economic base for many cities during the first half (or more) of the twentieth century, has also been the focus of vibrant scholarly activity. While the subject might be connected just as much to the Endowment of The Prosperous, this historiography has a very close link to The Just and Well-Ordered. Although a number of important works predated it, Thomas Sugrue's 1996 book *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* is the essential volume in this field.[13] Unlike earlier scholars, Sugrue made the critical move of connecting housing segregation and discrimination to structural economic change, showing how the early stages of deindustrialization in Detroit increased the economic insecurity of whites, making them more likely to resist the integration of neighborhoods while also creating a pull to suburbs and other regions of the country as jobs departed the central city. Sugrue also traces the devastating consequences of the erasure of Detroit's automobile base for the labor movement, for the future vitality of the city, and for the African American residents who most often remained there. This linking of race and economic change remains a crucial insight in the field, and has provided the basis for a number of key later works. This scholarship has shown more variability than Sugrue allowed in both the process of deindustrialization and the effectiveness of specific, place-based responses, but has also demonstrated the constraints that cities—as legally bounded entities with limited policy autonomy—faced relative to other levels of government and to national and global economic forces. Few areas make the constrained power of cities clearer than the study of deindustrialization.[14] Much of the work in this field also points to the central role of private sector actors in urban policy developments long before the advent of neoliberalism.[15]

This context of deep structural change has recently been paired with attention to the history of crime and criminal justice. Rising crime rates and increased illegal drug use led to public panics during the 1960s and 1970s that spurred both the War on Drugs and the introduction of harsh sentencing laws. In the following decades, these factors combined to create a crisis of mass incarceration that has devastated low-income and especially African American communities. Particularly during the late 1960s, crime also became linked in many people's minds to social protest, a development that contributed to a wave of urban blue-collar conservatism during the 1970s.[16] This interaction has had a profound effect on urban communities. In the context of The Just and Well-Ordered, it has led to a deeply flawed attempt to protect "the well-ordered" that has now undermined any meaningful notion of "the just" through the widespread incarceration of nonviolent offenders. Urban African-American communities have borne the brunt of such policies. The conjunction of changes in crime rates, shifts in sentencing policies, and the current incarceration issue shows the deep historical connections and interrelated webs of social and economic forces, all of which are concentrated in the city, and all of which have proved greater than the constrained powers of cities can generally resolve.

Although it is difficult to synthesize such diverse strands of literature, all of the works touched upon in this literature review emphasize the importance of understanding contemporary problems in the full context of long-term historical developments and forces. Few issues can be separated fully, or understood effectively, in the absence of attention to their past. This literature also makes clear that questions of "the well-ordered" cannot readily be separated from "the just." Very broadly, twentieth-century urban history might even be understood as a repeated effort to emphasize order while not adequately confronting the deeply rooted problems of race and structurally based inequality in US cities—and society generally. A final point to be drawn from the historical literature is the continuing relevance of place, even, or perhaps especially, in the context of globalization. Even transnational connections play out in specific locations.

III. THE ENDOWMENT IN CONTEXT

In broad terms, at least, the legal status of the city shapes the assessment of The Just and Well-Ordered. Cities have no legal standing under the US Constitution. Instead, they are chartered by state governments. This has a number of implications for cities, and puts constraints on the options available to citizens and policymakers. State charters are the source of the rights, obligations, and authority assumed by city governments. The result is that they are not fully autonomous entities: Cities are subject to state executives and legislatures. In some cases, those entities may represent other constituencies and may not be sympathetic to the needs or interests of cities, or responsive to the challenges cities face. Cities also exist in relation to regions that, with rare exceptions, lack metropolitan governance structures. This has often made it difficult, or impossible, to address problems that cross the boundaries of political jurisdictions. As a result, policy solutions that require regional solutions are often likewise difficult, or impossible, to develop.

In addition, federal urban policy has been highly variable and, often, of limited help to cities. Prior to the 1930s, federal aid to cities was largely nonexistent. This began to change with President Franklin D. Roosevelt's initiation in 1933 of the New Deal, which ushered in a period of substantial but sometimes problematic federal aid that was provided on a generally categorical basis. This meant that federal policymakers defined, often quite specifically, the purposes for which the assistance could be used. The 1970s and 1980s brought a partial return to federalism, under which federal revenue sharing and block grants continued to provide support but granted localities greater autonomy in the use of aid. Federalism also broadened the reach of urban policy, as suburbs and small communities became eligible for support, in addition to the large core cities that had generally been the target of the more categorical programs of the New Deal and, in the 1960s, the Great Society. Beginning with cuts to urban spending under President Ronald Reagan, federal urban policy has operated on what can be described as a limited austerity model. The assumption is that cities may receive limited assistance in specific areas such as education or infrastructure, but they must rely largely on their own resources (or those of the states) and, in some cases, those of the private sector.[17]

The result is that cities are highly vulnerable to shifts in support, as well as to competition with other communities and other regions, both in the United States and overseas. One consequence has been the emergence of what are often described as neoliberal models that emphasize business development and the use of market forces to advance, or even define, The Just and Well-Ordered. Whether these models accurately characterize recent developments, or whether the strategies themselves are even viable, is discussed in greater detail later in the present section. Regardless of such questions of policy strategy and goals, however, the broad legal and political economic status of the US city strongly constrains the capacity of communities to attain the promise of The Just and Well-Ordered specifically and "thriving" more generally.

Similarly, there is also what might be called an organic dimension to the constraints cities face in pursuing The Just and Well-Ordered. This relates directly to the idea of organized complexity, which relies heavily on the largely unplanned, informal aspects of city life and development. These include elements both of the built environment of cities and of the more innate interactions among people and between people and the urban environment, both built and natural. Disturbing these relationships, as will be shown in the present section, risks undermining or even destroying them. This danger places a significant limitation on what cities can do to attain "thriving."[18]

Beyond such formal and informal constraints, this Endowment and the possibilities it entails can best be understood by evaluating how cities' answers to two questions have evolved over time: First, what is "the well-ordered," and second, what is "the just"? At its most basic level, "the well-ordered" can be seen as consisting of varying models of local government. In its purest form, this might entail direct citizen participation, an ideal obtainable, if anywhere, only in the smallest communities. All others must therefore develop alternate systems. Throughout much of US urban history, this involved making deals, and accumulating power through a combination of politics, personal relationships, and control over resources. One early result was the creation of the fabled urban political machine, best known perhaps in the form it took in New York City's Tammany Hall, but prevalent in many cities during the period of industrialization, urbanization, and mass immigration. The operation of the machine, including the exercise of power by the urban political "boss," is typically seen as an example of corruption. In a strict sense, which defines any practice of special favor or monetary gain through government as evidence of corruption, this assessment applies to the era of the urban machine. Historians such as Joseph Huthmacher, Samuel Hays, John Buenker, and Jon Teaford have established, though, that the concept of corruption in this context is largely inherited from the political, and, often, social enemies of the machine, including members of the elite who sought to re-establish their traditional authority over a range of new ethnic groups that came to the city during the waves of immigration of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These scholars have argued instead for a contextual, more nuanced understanding of urban politics that emphasizes the functional or even productive characteristics of the machine. These included the provision of services to poor and working-class people, the construction of basic urban infrastructure, and the integration of new residents (both immigrants and rural migrants) into urban life. Other aspects of government and the political system simply could not serve these functions, and the machine and the boss stepped into the breach. Corruption might exist, but in this view it was simply the price of doing business in a complex and changing city. Progressivism, and even much of twentieth-century reform liberalism, can be traced to these constructive aspects of urban political machines.[19] Regardless of debates over the relative merits of corruption and functionality, machines clearly succeeded at encouraging high rates of participation in political life, from party activity to voting. More generally, this assessment of urban political machines leads to the first core observation about the Endowment: that the meaning of The Just and Well-Ordered depends heavily on perspective, and specifically on the social and economic position of the observer.

It should be noted that this point can be taken to extremes that ignore the costs of the machine approach to urban government. Even the most functional forms of "corruption" introduced inefficiency and may have eroded trust in governing institutions. Some members of the community would always be on the outside of the machine's operation, without full access to its benefits. Further, the functional dimensions of machine governance depended heavily on the resources available to its leaders. These resources varied with the fluctuations of the local and national economies. The result was a highly cyclical pattern of machine capacity that often broke down in periods of economic stress—in other words, when residents needed it most. By the mid-twentieth century, and certainly by the final decades of the century, the classic urban machine had gone into seemingly permanent decline, undermined by population shifts, assimilation of earlier immigrant groups, an inability to serve the African American population that came to the cities in the Great Migration, and the weakening fiscal position of many city governments (which deprived machines of the resources they needed to function).[20]

Machine government, of course, had been under challenge for decades before its ultimate collapse. This opposition came from a series of "reform" alternatives that offered a vastly different vision of how a "well-ordered" city might be run. Although there are important nineteenth-century precedents, the progressives of the final years of that century and the first two decades of the twentieth century had the longest-lasting impact on how urbanists today think about options for achieving the well-ordered city. The progressives offered a number of conceptions of how urban government could contribute to such a goal. One was the introduction of structural reforms to city government that removed its basic operations from political, or popular, control. The introduction of a city manager represented a key example of this strategy. This approach to urban reform relied on the assumption that investing power in a strong mayor or a politically responsive city council allowed officeholders to pursue their own interests at the expense of the public good. In contrast, a city manager not beholden to voters could act as a disinterested expert who would better protect, and in fact identify and represent, the true public interest. Of course, elite and middle-class progressives often had difficulty distinguishing their own interests from such a public interest, but the idea nonetheless introduced an expansive concept of the potential of expertise to achieve the well-ordered and presumably just city. In practice, city managers largely proved a disappointment. In addition, Amy Bridges has shown that the form became common not in the industrial cities of the Northeast and Midwest where bosses had actually ruled, but in the newer cities of the Southwest.[21]

The ideal of city planning represented another important manifestation of the progressive faith in the value of expertise. City planning is based on the idea that expert-led physical ordering or reordering of the city can produce a more healthful, productive, and functional urban environment. Although it can be traced from early examples such as Pierre Charles L'Enfant's plan for Washington and through the mid-nineteenth-century movement to create urban parks that would relieve the strain of urban-industrial life (serving as the "lungs of the city," in the words of Frederick Law Olmsted), city planning emerged in full form in the great but mostly unrealized comprehensive plans of Daniel Burnham at the turn of the twentieth century. Following his own dictum to "make no little plans," Burnham envisioned a triumphal city, rebuilt around grand public buildings and civic spaces and exhibiting the power of the metropolis and, by extension, of American industrial civilization. Ranging from the fully realized design of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago to largely unconsummated plans for Chicago itself and for the reconstruction of San Francisco following the earthquake of 1906, Burnham's plans exemplified the larger ideal that an adequately informed—and empowered—expert could perceive and meet human needs, in this case through the comprehensive planning of cities. In various forms, this objective would inform city planning into the second half of the twentieth century.[22] At its best, it produced rigorous efforts to identify and apply principles of design that would make cities and metropolitan areas more livable. At its worst, however, this physically oriented approach to the city ignored the social, economic, and cultural factors that lay at the heart of urban problems. It also encouraged a hubristic form of expertise that often disregarded the desires and knowledge of non-experts, ignored the use value that people derived from existing spaces, and damaged the often delicate economic networks that had formed in existing communities. These aspects of planning all ignored key aspects of Jane Jacobs's "organized complexity" in favor of an overly aesthetic, largely architectural view of the city. It also highlights the extent to which the creation of organized complexity frequently results from processes that are more organic than planned, and thus not fully subject to control or helpful modification by policymakers and technocratic experts. The "well-ordered," in such planning situations, too often undermines or even destroys "the just."

Another form of progressive action reflected the complex role of gender as it had developed in the industrial city. This was the idea of female-led reform in the interests of women and children, sometimes referred to as "municipal housekeeping" because of the way it extended women's assumed sphere of domestic management outward from the home to the larger city. Often organized through women's clubs, this approach was a way for women, or at least middle- and upper-class women, to engage in reform campaigns and exert political influence in a pre-suffrage political system. The settlement movement, also heavily influenced and often led by female reformers, is another example of the centrality of women in progressive reform. All these forms, however, still ultimately relied on the core progressive assumption that expertise could and should be applied for the greater good of the city and its people.[23]

By the time the United States entered World War I, the progressive reform effort had yielded substantial results in such areas as municipal sanitation and public health, public utilities, transportation, and, to a lesser extent, government reform. Despite the larger legal and jurisdictional constraints on cities, this period showed that the intensive application of expertise could have significant effects. Increasingly, however, some of the limitations of the expert-driven progressive approach became apparent as well. Persistent class tensions and conflict raised questions about the true capacity of experts to manage the city without privileging the interests of some residents above those of others. The true, disinterested identification of a general public interest proved elusive, and its implementation proved difficult. This became brutally apparent in a wave of strikes following the armistice that ended the war in November 1918. Business and government interests combined to meet this upheaval with repression and violence aimed largely at immigrants and radicals.[24] The Great Depression, in turn, strained and in some cases nearly destroyed the economic foundation of the modern city, leading to new calls for an expanded federal role in supporting the viability of the city, and municipal governments in particular. Beginning with the New Deal, substantial federal fiscal resources became available to city governments for the first time.[25]

As this federal funding model became more entrenched after World War II (despite continuing conservative opposition), a new concept of pluralist competition for resources began to supplement if not supplant the progressive ideal of expert governance. In the pluralist conception of the city, interest groups bargained for authority and influence over decisions, forming alliances to advance mutual goals or at least trade off support in ways that advanced particular agendas. The pluralist ideal was that out of this process of intergroup priority setting and competition a rough social and political-economic balance would ultimately emerge that would allow the city to function. Ideally, it would even provide a kind of safety valve that would relieve the pressures of social conflict. Pluralism, in this sense, provided a model of “the well-ordered” that assumed that “the just” would follow naturally. In its urban context at least, pluralism also reflected the post–World War II moment of increased federal attention to cities, along with a general policy focus on finding an effective means to revive core cities in the aftermath of depression and war and in the face of rapidly accelerating suburbanization.[26]

Together, these forces and ideas provided an opening for the new policy strategy of urban renewal, which operated on the premise that older urban forms had become obsolete because of physical decline, changes in cultural preferences, and, especially, the powerful new presence of the automobile. Urban renewal built on the older progressive ideal of the expert by adding a new layer of Modernist thought. Mid-century architectural and design Modernism operated on the core idea that the city could be rationalized and reordered by expert-led clearance and reconstruction. Emphasizing basic functions and technological needs, Modernism celebrated the separation of uses into single-purpose districts (residential, commercial, industrial, transportation) and rejected the diversity of function that characterized most existing neighborhoods. It emphasized a placeless, technological aesthetic of the machine that rejected not only local, vernacular architectural traditions but also most forms of overt ornamentation. More generally, Modernism devalued tradition and the choices that had actually been made by humans living in cities, and assumed that the planner and the architect had the capacity to manage complex human systems in a rational and socially beneficial way.[27] Pluralism played a key part in justifying urban renewal’s application of architectural Modernism, as it put forth as a basic premise the principle that intergroup bargaining would limit the harm that clearance would pose for any group or neighborhood—or, at the least, that it would assure that they received an equitable share of the assumed benefits.

At the more prosaic level of the function of public policy and urban real estate markets, the federal urban renewal program operated by providing a subsidy, or write-down, that covered the difference between the acquisition, clearance, and construction costs of rebuilding projects and the returns a project would ultimately bring through sales or rentals. According to this rationale, the normal operation of urban real estate markets prevented necessary redevelopment because the combined costs exceeded those projected returns, with the result that the city would not be rebuilt by the private sector alone. Such thinking also relied on the premise, sometimes true but almost always unexamined, that the best course of action for existing “blighted” neighborhoods was clearance and reconstruction.

All of these elements were deployed to justify the federal urban renewal program. From the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s, urban renewal funded the demolition of urban neighborhoods, particularly in central city areas, all around the United States. Problems emerged almost immediately. In the aftermath of the Great Migration, and in the context of extensive and intensified residential segregation, low-income African Americans lived in many of the areas defined by planners as "blighted." As a result, many urban blacks lost their homes in urban renewal programs. Often, promised new homes in (Modernist) public housing projects either were never built or deteriorated rapidly because of cost cutting that resulted in inferior construction, poor design choices, the concentration of low-income people in high-rise towers, and ineffective management by local housing authorities. In other cases, displacement simply led to increased overcrowding and accelerated decline in adjacent neighborhoods that had escaped clearance. As a result of the often stark racial dimensions of this process, urban renewal became colloquially known in many cities as "Negro removal." In addition to raising these issues of racial injustice, critics increasingly criticized the sterile banality of the landscape that resulted from urban renewal. Although Modernist architecture had its triumphs, its output in the average American city tended toward the creation of anonymous, interchangeable "urban renewal" downtowns of concrete-and-glass office buildings, hotels, and convention centers, along with increasingly notorious high-rise public housing towers that stood in isolation from the surrounding city. In many cases, the organic life of the city, constructed through decades of loosely regulated human activity, was stripped away.[28]

By the 1970s, many US cities, most notably New York, were suffering through devastating fiscal crises that threatened their ability to provide basic municipal services. Deindustrialization was accelerating as well, exacerbating these problems. Urban renewal, it seemed, had not even delivered on its promise of a revitalized central business district based on the service industry and capable of providing for the basic fiscal sustainability of the city. Seen in another way, the group bargaining of pluralism had failed to provide fundamental protections either for weaker social groups or for the greater public good—however that was to be defined.[29]

Increasingly, these weaknesses led to challenges by a series of urban intellectual and social movements that rebelled against the expert and the presumptions of Modernism. During the 1950s and 1960s, Jane Jacobs not only led campaigns to protect her Greenwich Village neighborhood from the plans of New York urban renewal master Robert Moses, but also wrote a manifesto that offered a defense of the existing city and its virtues. In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), Jacobs challenged the basic premises of city planning, urban renewal, and Modernism itself, arguing that vital mixed-use neighborhoods with a diversity of people and activities were the key to a thriving city. Expert-derived plans, in contrast, merely interfered with these human processes and relationships, and the organized complexity that they could, at their best, produce. Even crime, she argued, was better controlled in the traditional urban neighborhood, as its mix of uses meant that someone had "eyes on the street" at all times.[30]

Jacobs's work has transformed thinking about cities and planning, reshaping basic principles of what is desirable in a community. Still, her perspectives, and the rebellion she led, at least in part represented a social movement of elites capable of influencing the workings of power in New York City and publicizing ideas through major magazines and books from important publishing houses. Not all of her ideas about the economic or social life of cities proved immediately applicable beyond Greenwich Village and her immediate circle of activists, but they nonetheless have had a tremendous influence on how scholars, urban policymakers, and city residents have thought about the city ever since.[31] Despite the sometimes elitist perspective of her approach, Jacobs effectively undermined what had too often become the oppressive power of the expert. In its place, she offered the possibility that recognizing and maximizing the value of the organized complexity embedded in the living city represented the basis for thriving—a basis that could, perhaps, be simultaneously just and well-ordered.

Other, nearly simultaneous rebellions against the "urban renewal order" took place as well, often drawing on impulses related to but distinct from those that motivated Jacobs. The civil rights movement was at the core of many such rebellions. As historians such as Matthew Countryman, Thomas Sugrue, Thomas Jackson, and Nancy Maclean have made clear, the movement is too often misunderstood, viewed as being purely southern and primarily focused on civil and political rights.[32] Instead, it was a national movement, with a substantial presence in northern and western cities. Further, it presented demands for justice that encompassed the economic as well as the social and the political—and saw them all as intertwined. The movement's claims, in other words, ran far deeper, and were far more radical, than common assumptions today about achieving a color-blind, post-racial society. Understood in this broader context, the movement of the 1950s and 1960s ran through the North as well as the South and presented demands for the basic economic reorganization of society. In the urban context, this included a claim that the well-ordered city required a far more expansive concept of justice than that which generally prevailed in the urban renewal city.

Broadly conceived, the urban civil rights movement challenged the urban renewal order on multiple fronts. In the early 1960s, protestors in New York, Philadelphia, Cleveland, and other cities challenged racial discrimination in hiring on federally funded construction projects, many of which operated under the aegis of urban renewal.[33] Employment equity, in this conception, mattered as much as physical planning as a component of the well-ordered city. Later in the decade, the local Community Action Programs authorized by the Lyndon B. Johnson administration's War on Poverty provided another basis for challenging existing structures of power in all aspects of urban government and service provision. Requiring the "maximum feasible participation" of the poor in the operation of its programs, Community Action facilitated a new assertion of power by low-income Americans (in rural as well as urban areas). Like the construction protests, this effort pursued the economic dimensions of the civil rights agenda, and asserted the centrality of economic as well as physical or legal order in the city. Although the Community Action Program, unsurprisingly, proved controversial (due to the resistance of existing institutions to such claims) and its scale grossly inadequate to the challenges facing the poor, the War on Poverty did use the authority of the federal government to reallocate at least limited resources to previously disempowered people. In many cases, it produced significant if ultimately small-scale results: health programs overseen by poor communities, welfare programs that met statutory requirements, community-based job training programs that addressed remedial education needs as well as the need for job skills, and permanent representation of the poor on the boards of local social service institutions.[34] Although not always fully realized, such initiatives established new principles of what a well-ordered city—or community—actually meant. A larger limitation remained, however, in that the federal War on Poverty relied on a combination of political and cultural (in the sense of changing the skills, behavior, and attitudes of the poor themselves) models, and deliberately ignored larger shifts in the structure of the economy. As deindustrialization accelerated again during the 1970s and 1980s, and as federal aid for cities began to be reduced, this approach proved to be insufficient as a basis for effective social *or* policy action toward achieving the well-ordered city, much less sustaining it or linking it to meaningful conceptions of what is just.

Nonetheless, the social, political, and intellectual movements of the 1960s and early 1970s transformed conceptions of the well-ordered city. Within the field of city planning, younger practitioners such as Paul Davidoff developed community-based participatory planning models that strove to incorporate the ideas and needs of city residents.[35] At the theoretical level, a far more nuanced conception of power itself emerged. Along with older conceptions that viewed power as the capacity to implement projects or the ability to set political agendas for deciding which projects would be considered, scholars suggested a "third face of power": the subtle capacity to determine which *ideas* would be considered as acceptable options, or even conceived of as possible at all. In the decades since the 1960s, this third face of power has proved the most durable and the most limiting in shaping the options available to those who might pursue the thriving city. In order to connect "the well-ordered" and "the just," this third face of power must be recognized, critiqued, and, when necessary, challenged.[36] This is the second core point of this Endowment brief: that The Just and Well-Ordered can be jeopardized through excessive reliance on expertise.

At the level of practical policy, Modernism, urban renewal, and the authority of the expert had thus all been discredited by the end of the 1960s. While all had to some degree fallen by virtue of their own inconsistencies, failures, and even hypocrisies, this shift nonetheless created a crisis: What would replace the urban renewal order? Those who sought active and viable approaches to pursuing the thriving city had to develop new concepts and policies to achieve that goal. In many respects, this is the challenge we still face today. How, exactly, do we seek the thriving city while avoiding the inhumane qualities of high Modernism, the human costs of urban renewal, or the tyranny of the expert? One answer, perhaps, is provided by James Scott, who urges that those who would shape human communities do so from a position of humility that recognizes, appreciates, and seeks to sustain existing local knowledge, tradition, and history.[37]

The present section of this brief began with the question, What is "the well-ordered"? This historical overview has brought the analysis of the thriving city beyond the core issues of machine versus reform government or the mechanisms of transportation, city planning, or the efficient operation of utilities and city services. It has, in effect, raised the second question posed at the start of this section: What is "the just"? In this area, it seems clear that policymakers, urbanists, and activists are even farther from developing a truly thriving city. At the most basic level, American cities have struggled since the first half of the twentieth century with enduring issues of racial and economic segregation. This practice has been based in public policy as well as in the actions of the private sector. It has been reinforced by community norms, direct intimidation, and even violence. In addition, as the historian Carl Nightingale has shown, patterns of segregation in the United States are part of a global pattern that first developed under colonialism, and thrived across the world as techniques for separating populations developed and were exchanged among places ranging from Chicago to South Africa.[38] This relationship suggests that questions of justice and the thriving city extend far beyond national borders.

Yet this problem has proved particularly, if not uniquely, acute in the United States, where segregation has interacted with racial discrimination and economic inequality to deny "the just" and ultimately undermine "the well-ordered" in many cities. This pattern first emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Previously, US cities generally had not exhibited high levels of racial or class segregation. Although certainly not exemplars of harmonious intergroup relations, nineteenth-century cities facilitated a significant degree of spatial proximity among groups. As immigration and the Great Migration continued, however, both self-imposed and externally enforced separation gradually increased. Periodically during the early decades of the twentieth century, brutal outbursts of violence against African Americans occurred in cities such as Tulsa, Chicago, and Detroit. By the start of World War II, residential segregation had emerged as a tool of social control and, increasingly, economic exploitation. Theoretically, the separation of groups could reduce conflict and the costs and public embarrassment it posed for elites, while the containment of a marginalized group such as African Americans to a spatially defined ghetto limited the housing stock available to it and allowed landlords to charge high rents for often decrepit housing. Practices such as redlining, in which banks refused to make mortgage or home improvement loans in racially or ethnically mixed neighborhoods, simultaneously provided a financial incentive to enforce boundaries while also ensuring that physical deterioration of areas occupied by blacks would continue. Federal mortgage insurance, first developed under the New Deal, adopted redlining as a basic practice. The resulting efforts of federal housing agencies to map and grade the investment risk of urban neighborhoods thus further entrenched redlining as a principle of American housing finance.[39]

From its beginnings in the nineteenth century, suburbanization exacerbated these patterns. Although black suburbs did exist, and sometimes thrived, developers of the great preponderance of suburban housing adopted racially restrictive standards.[40] Federal mortgage insurance and private redlining practices, as well as the existence of racial covenants in housing deeds (legal before a 1948 Supreme Court decision), reinforced these patterns. Suburban homeowners also received federal subsidies in the form of what economists refer to as *tax expenditures*: deductions granted in the tax code that have the same budgetary effects as direct spending. Most notably, these subsidies included federal tax deductions for property taxes and mortgage interest payments, both of which created a subsidy, and an incentive, for homeownership. Although not a tax expenditure, federal mortgage insurance represented another subsidy for suburban homeownership because it reduced the risk borne by lenders and allowed them to charge lower interest rates. After World War II, federally funded highway construction made new areas accessible for suburban development, effectively offering a further subsidy through the construction of transportation infrastructure. All of these benefits (with the exception of high-ways, of course) were available only to whites.[41] Further, their indirect character made them largely invisible to their beneficiaries, who could then construct a myth of “racial innocence” through which they portrayed their advantages as the result solely of hard work while ignoring the role of racial privilege and federal subsidies in creating and supporting their communities. This allowed the maintenance of a belief that they had earned the benefits of homeownership without any form of help from the state. In the aftermath of the civil rights movement, this pattern allowed white suburbanites to reject racial prejudice as a theoretical construct while resisting direct policies to redress the historical harms of racial segregation in their own communities.[42]

Initially, public housing seemed to offer a potential mechanism to integrate communities and to facilitate social and economic mobility across classes and racial groups. In practice, however, inadequate funding, along with an unwillingness to challenge existing local residential patterns, undermined this promise. The Supreme Court’s ruling in the 1935 case *United States v. Certain Lands in City of Louisville* required that local rather than federal authorities handle the selection of sites and the construction of public housing.[43] While it is far from certain that the federal government would have actually promoted integrated public housing or dispersed-site construction, local housing authorities quickly gave in to the demands of real estate interests as well as white residents that public housing not challenge existing racial patterns. As a result, instead of being built on open land on the periphery of cities, or even in neighborhoods where it might have furthered the mixing of groups, public housing in the United States was usually sited in a way that led to the further concentration of poor and minority groups, particularly African Americans. This was the construction of the “second ghetto,” through which cities like Chicago built vast public housing complexes consisting mostly of high-rise towers on the sites of recently cleared slums. These second ghettos proved no less segregated than their predecessors.[44] In combination with the frequent racial injustices of urban renewal, public housing contributed significantly to the discrediting of urban experts and to a decline of general public faith in the ability of government to address urban problems. The failures of public housing ultimately led to current policy initiatives that emphasize socioeconomic integration and the deconcentration of the poor, policy strategies that, as yet, have only been partially realized.[45]

These latter strategies are part of a larger shift in housing policy that since the Fair Housing Act of 1968 has sought to promote the provision of low-income housing through public-private partnerships. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 created the Section 8 Program, which, in addition to making housing subsidies available to low-income renters, provided vouchers to developers who built new low-income housing. The legislation also initiated the Community Development Block Grants program, which replaced urban renewal (and the urban initiatives of the Great Society) and offered local communities greater control over the use of federal urban funds. A series of additional measures, such as the 1986 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit and the “HOME” subsidy program (created under the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990), further facilitated not just private participation in the creation of low-income housing but also the expansion of nonprofit housing organizations enmeshed in a network of public-private housing development.[46] While some of these networks succeeded in constructing decent, affordable housing, others failed to deliver on promised construction, in some cases even after receiving public funds. Meanwhile, programs such as HOPE VI, begun during the administration of President Bill Clinton, initiated the demolition of many existing housing projects and replaced them with units that would be fewer in number (in most cases) and built on a smaller scale in socioeconomically mixed areas. These developments reflect the wider focus of housing policy on the development of mixed-income, racially integrated communities. While this approach has emerged as the standard preference of urban policymakers, it has increasingly faced criticism from both community activists and the emerging field of critical urban studies. Although the harms of concentration are clear, the benefits of deconcentration have not yet been demonstrated.[47] Overall, metropolitan-scale injustices prove difficult to eradicate when they have deep but often hidden roots. This problem is exacerbated by the limited legal and jurisdictional powers of cities and local communities. Quite simply, it is difficult to promote integration across the political boundaries of metropolitan areas.

Another critical policy issue that has been a source simultaneously of profound injustice and perpetual hope is education. Although public education has long been seen as a wellspring of democratic equality, this perspective has been especially powerful since the Supreme Court's finding in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) that school segregation was unconstitutional.[48] Although *Brown* is commonly seen as a triumph of civil rights litigation, the harsh reality is that enduring patterns of housing segregation have meant that full school integration has never been achieved in the United States. In the decades after *Brown*, even the eradication of formal Jim Crow school segregation proved slow and halting. The federal government made substantial progress only after federal money became available as a lever for desegregation with passage in 1965 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which for the first time provided federal funds for general aid to education—dollars that could only be received if a school district operated on a nondiscriminatory basis. Even so, this condition applied only within school districts, and in 1974 the Supreme Court ruled in *Milliken v. Bradley* that desegregation could not be required *across* political boundaries. This meant that desegregation through busing of children away from neighborhood schools could take place within cities but not across metropolitan regions. Given the entrenched patterns of regional racial segregation, this meant that true school integration could not actually be achieved. Racial (and economic) patterns in housing would thus be reflected in patterns of school attendance. Busing, in any case, proved difficult and controversial, as explosive conflicts in Boston and other cities during the mid-1970s drew on deep wells of racial and class-based anger and resentment.[49] This reaction helped to block further efforts to achieve more racially and economically just cities, and contributed to the larger political turn against activist urban policies. In reality, broader efforts to desegregate schools by busing children across large metropolitan areas may simply never have been a practical option. School desegregation in the United States failed—and it failed because of deep patterns of racial and class segregation in housing. The result has been the concentration of poor, minority, and at-risk children in specific schools, often in inner-city areas.

Nonetheless, a pervasive belief has remained among elites that such factors can be ignored, and that school improvement—and hence educational justice—can be achieved through high-stakes testing and accountability. This has been the central thrust of education reform in the United States for nearly twenty years, reflected in particular in the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (actually a series of amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).[50] At times, this has taken on a more idealistic cast, as in the call by the volunteer program Teach For America for highly educated young people to spend a minimum of two years teaching in high-poverty schools. While aspects of this broader emphasis may be laudable—certainly, every child *should* have an excellent or at least competent teacher—the idea that schools and teachers can overcome the wider circumstances of their students' lives has actually become a barrier to achieving the just city. This principle now allows society to avoid honest conversations about segregation and poverty. Under this approach, schools and teachers will be held accountable for failure, while neighborhoods, and society as a whole, can continue exactly as they are.[51]

These effects have been further shaped by pervasive changes in the wider economy that have (at least until recently) disproportionately affected urban communities. In particular, deindustrialization reshaped the material basis for justice in the city specifically and in society more generally. Although the roots of deindustrialization can be traced back at least to the 1920s, the loss of high-employment, low- to medium-skill manufacturing began to accelerate in the 1950s, with the process reaching a peak of intensity in the 1980s and 1990s.[52] Throughout this period, many older cities, especially in the Northeast and Midwest, appeared increasingly to be economically irrelevant, with their remaining population effectively stranded. This situation contributed greatly to the concentration of poverty in core cities, with all of the attendant effects of physical decay, educational impoverishment, and fiscal stress. The recent bankruptcy of Detroit, although in actuality the result of a particular confluence of unique factors, is often seen as paradigmatic of this larger process.

More generally, though, deindustrialization reflected the consequences of global economic shifts and the capacity of corporations to seek out low-cost labor and production areas.[53] Its specific outcomes, however, are more locally determined. In particular, the failure of most areas of the United States to adopt any form of metropolitan governance or burden sharing meant that the effects of deindustrialization became intertwined with racial and economic segregation to place particularly heavy burdens on core cities. The result, as in Detroit and many other cities, is that the tax base cannot sustain even basic services, much less more aggressive efforts to achieve or sustain a just city or region. Recently, these problems have become more generalized, spreading beyond the inner city to affect suburban and rural communities (the latter of which face their own unique challenges). As a result, the future of many communities, perhaps even of the city itself, has often seemed uncertain in recent decades.

This sense of instability has frequently been exacerbated by issues of crime and, increasingly, criminal justice. Beginning in the 1960s, the United States experienced a destabilizing surge in crime. Spurred by a combination of factors including high rates of poverty, the progression of the large "baby boom" generational cohort through adolescence and young adulthood, and the increased use of illegal drugs, rates of both petty and violent crime rose throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Fear of being a victim of crime produced a series of consequences, ranging from avoidance of central cities to an embrace of a "tough-on-crime" political mindset. Particularly among white Americans, such political views interacted in a toxic fashion with a resentment of the changes in race relations and norms brought about by the social movements of the 1960s. This produced a form of backlash politics that contributed to the election during the 1970s of racially divisive political figures such as Frank Rizzo, who was mayor of Philadelphia from 1972 to 1980. It played a part as well in the consolidation of conservatism nationally during the period, as politicians competed to claim the votes of those who saw lawlessness as an issue of prime importance.[54] Over the longer term, such developments had significant consequences for cities, and for society as a whole. Tougher laws and sentencing requirements, particularly for drug offenses, led to a significant increase in long-term incarcerations. This continued even after crime rates began to fall substantially during the mid-1990s. The incarceration wave—better described, perhaps, as a crisis—has had a particularly devastating effect on low-income African American communities, where incarceration disrupts families and criminal records limit employment prospects. Recent protests against police killings of African Americans in Ferguson, Missouri, Staten Island, North Charleston, South Carolina, and Baltimore dramatically illustrate the contradictions wrought by criminal justice policy over many decades in the United States. While pervasive crime can be seen as the antithesis of the well-ordered city, excessively punitive approaches to crime prevention and criminal prosecution can deny justice for already marginalized individuals and communities. Ironically, this inattention to "the just" can, in turn, diminish meaningful aspects of "the well-ordered." This outcome is particularly likely when the crisis of mass incarceration is combined with the problems posed by economic decline and failing educational systems.[55]

All of this brings this Endowment brief back to the question of education reform. This history of racial segregation, structural economic change, disinvestment, and mass incarceration provides the context in which education reform takes place. Together, the components of this framework suggest the third key point of the brief: that in pursuing The Just and Well-Ordered, those who seek to bring change, whether policymakers, activists, or social entrepreneurs, never write on a blank slate. History is always present, and is ignored at our peril. Too often, however, we act as though doing so is a positive good.

Despite these ongoing problems, metropolitan areas, and central cities in particular, have experienced something of a resurgence since the Great Recession (or perhaps since the 1990s). Although inner-city poverty rates remain high, population losses have slowed or even reversed (depending on the city and region), and cities have re-emerged as centers of cultural and economic dynamism. Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley have gone so far as to argue that the United States is currently experiencing a "metropolitan revolution" reflecting this new, or at least revived, centrality of cities, especially large metropolitan areas.[56] Opportunity and innovation, in this view, now occur primarily in such areas, which as a result attract skilled and talented individuals who create reinforcing networks and cultural milieus. Critics often note that the benefits of this revival have not extended to impoverished neighborhoods, or at least that the result is gentrification of any area with an advantageous location. Nonetheless, this new dynamism offers a moment of promise for urban areas that would have seemed nearly unthinkable twenty years ago.[57]

The inequalities inherent to this system remain unsettling, however, and have led to a number of critical assessments of this form of thriving city. One significant line of critique challenges "neoliberal" policies (local, national, and global) that privatize public services, cut welfare benefits, and prioritize market forces and the needs of large corporations. In its full form, this critique argues that cities have undergone a shift from *government* in pursuit of a broad public good to a form of *governance* that simply reinforces the values of the market—although those market forces are frequently supported by public subsidies ranging from tax abatements to infrastructure provision. The literature on neoliberalism raises key challenges to many reigning paradigms of the recent urban revival, as it questions what "the well-ordered" means and for whom it applies, and whether "the just" even remains a goal in such a city.[58]

Although widespread among radical scholars, the neoliberal critique is rarely embraced by policymakers. This reflects a wide gap in perspective, depending on whether the phenomena it describes are seen as a practical answer to very real urban problems and fiscal constraints, or as an inability to imagine solutions beyond obeisance to the market (the "third face" of power) and support or even subsidization of the needs of corporations. A full evaluation of these ideas requires moving beyond what is in reality a deep ideological divide and assessing the potential positive and negative consequences of the broader forces—and policies—that supposedly undergird the "neoliberal city." Negative implications include increased inequality, the potential abandonment of the poor to the vagaries of markets, wasteful subsidies for corporate activity, and impediments to the creation of policy solutions that could benefit all residents of the city. Positive aspects of neoliberal policies might include an improved (or even sustainable) fiscal position, greater efficiency, and increased activity, economic vibrancy, and safety. The disjuncture between these views raises the question of balance: whether the negative aspects can be reduced while the (supposed) positives can be sustained and even enhanced.

A significant problem for the critical neoliberal interpretation, however, is that it is largely ahistorical. It ignores the degree to which corporate and business forces have long been enmeshed in city life, and in economic development in capitalist societies more generally. Although there has certainly been an increased embrace of market forces and market-oriented solutions in recent decades, it remains unclear to what extent this has actually extended beyond earlier developmental efforts that involved close interactions between the public and private sectors.[59] This critique of neoliberalism may also ascribe normative status to periods of enhanced state activity during the New Deal and Great Society, or of increased assertiveness by social movements during the 1960s, when in fact such periods are exceptions.[60]

A more useful way of assessing recent trends may be to understand them as part of a broad "third sector" governance model that emphasizes mixed approaches to urban challenges and accepts certain aspects of market-based policy but does not necessarily become a tool of large-scale corporate interests. Such a view accepts the capacity for positive contributions from public-private partnerships and social entrepreneurship as well as from government and community-based social movements (neither of which is rejected). This approach acknowledges the clear limitations of market-based approaches, and recognizes that inequities of power do exist in the city. It tries, however, to identify pragmatic solutions within the bounds of what is politically attainable. Such an approach will not, it should be stated, satisfy committed critics of neoliberalism, for whom radical transformation is a necessity. This raises the question of how great a level of conflict is needed to achieve the just city—or, at least, an acceptable modicum of justice. The strategy of pragmatism—the fourth core point of this Endowment brief—is less contentious than a direct challenge to neoliberalism, but it is more likely to produce results because it is rooted in the troubled but dynamic history of the US metropolis.

"The Just and Well-Ordered is thus characterized by a high degree of sustained uncertainty. Prosperity has returned to many US cities, but not for all residents. The cultural and economic centrality of the city again seems clear, as advocates of the "metropolitan revolution" position have argued, but cities remain plagued by deeply rooted inequality. This is, of course, a problem that is part of a much wider, global pattern, one that appears to be growing more rather than less pervasive. Framing this Endowment brief in the context of urban history demonstrates that any sense of stability or stasis in the metropolitan environment is likely illusory, and hence that we must address what thriving means, how to attain it, and, above all, how it can be sustained. Avoiding the extreme swings of both ideology and policy practice that have characterized the past century seems advisable—but balance alone may not be an adequate solution.

IV. CONNECTING THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED TO EXISTING METRICS AND THE OTHER ENDOWMENTS

For a historian, encountering the existing metrics in the urban policy field is a somewhat disorienting experience. Most are remarkably fine-grained and heavily quantified, yet seem to offer at best a crude measure of The Just and Well-Ordered. With very limited exceptions, most are deeply ahistorical, offering little ability to assess change over time (although presumably, that could be built up if the indices were maintained and periodically updated). While in some cases individually rich, their existing capacity to yield deep insights seems quite limited. There is a danger that they may offer policymakers a false positivism that justifies decisions on a basis that appears rigorous, but actually ignores the wider context and historical development of thriving. Of course, one of the main goals of the Thriving Cities Project is to construct new mechanisms that will transcend these limitations. In one sense, this suggests the promise of the potential Thriving Cities keystone variables, with their attention to qualitative dimensions of thriving and the full range of human ecologies embodied in the Endowments. It also, however, highlights the difficult challenges inherent to creating such a metric. With that qualification stated, some of the more promising existing metrics can be highlighted, which in turn allows identification of what appear to be the stronger existing indices in the area of The Just and Well-ordered. This review will proceed through the organizing categories in the “Selected Sample Indicators by Endowment” document provided by the project.

The first category, “Basic Services and Infrastructure,” illustrates some of the problems with existing indices. Many of the metrics provide a useful but exceedingly narrow gauge of how well a community may be doing in basic operational functions, which is the narrowest sense of “well-ordered” as reviewed in this brief. An example of this is the “average fire call response time” variable provided by the Global City Indicators facility. This is useful to know, and provides a measure of how well a basic public service is provided. It does not reach the larger meaning of the Endowment. If it could be linked to other variables and characteristics, however, such as average response time organized by *neighborhood*, it might offer insights into how well the two components of the Endowment interact in the area. A few indicators, such as the Boston Indicators Project’s measures of government’s promotion of civic engagement through technology and social media and of public access to data, are potentially key measures of how well citizens can connect with government. Similarly, the STAR Community Rating System (hereafter referred to as STAR) provides useful measures of code violation and hazard threat reductions over time. This offers insights into how well a community is managing housing quality problems, and introduces at least a degree of attention to temporality. Similarly, measures of transit access and cost (STAR, Santa Monica Sustainable City Program, Greater Portland Pulse), food access (STAR), and housing affordability (STAR) are all key indicators that may provide a synergistic quality when combined with one another and with other indicators. In general, utility in this area may increase either with the cumulative use of many indicators or with the identification of a number of central metrics such as those mentioned above.

The “Law and Order” area provides an even clearer illustration of the problems with existing indices. Numerous metrics exist for measuring various aspects of crime. All of these have value in identifying how high or low crime levels may be in a given community. They offer little or no indication, however, of how the criminal justice system actually functions relative to specific populations. As a result, they give no indication at all of the consequences of mass incarceration. Greater Portland Pulse is a limited exception, providing measures of “community demographics compared to persons arrested, charged, convicted, and under supervision,” and of recidivism rates. STAR again offers some attention to change over time, measuring shifts in violent crime in the aftermath of adoption of a strategic plan. No measures, though, exist for evaluating the life prospects of those released from prison, or even of their ability to regain basic civil rights, much less full social and economic reintegration into the larger community. Given the centrality of incarceration as a barrier to thriving in many minority communities, this is a significant shortcoming that the Thriving Cities index should address.

The "Justice" area offers far more attention to the effects of race, with indices such as STAR and Santa Monica Sustainable City measuring the involvement of women and people of color in both elected and appointed positions. Both also offer indicators of the effectiveness of efforts to investigate and redress cases of discrimination or civil and human rights complaints. The Jacksonville Quality of Life Progress Report and Community Indicators Victoria also offer useful measures. Again, it would be useful to measure changes in all of these areas. The "Civic Engagement" section also has value, as many of the indicators provide basic but clear measures of involvement with aspects of civic life: attending meetings, contacting elected officials, or participating in the leadership of community organizations and government bodies. The same indices appear once again: STAR, Santa Monica Sustainable City, Greater Portland Pulse, and Community Indicators Victoria. These clearly seem to be the most valuable existing models for an index of The Just and Well-Ordered.

The "Perceptions" section offers more qualitative measures of different aspects of thriving. These range from views of racism in the Jacksonville Report and the What Matters in Greater Phoenix index. A number of the indices address tolerance and acceptance of diversity. In all of these cases, the value of the indicators likely depends heavily on the construction of the survey and the selection of respondents. Nonetheless, these measures have the potential to offer more nuanced insights into The Just and Well-Ordered than the more purely quantitative measures in other areas. Also useful is a range of indicators not on crime itself but on *perceptions* of crime and safety. These are offered in the indices for Phoenix, Santa Monica, Portland, Victoria, and Jacksonville.

The final section of additional indicators offers a wide range of potentially useful, mostly quantitative measures that have value only if placed in context. It is difficult to assess whether the existing indices do so. Of note here is a measure of residential segregation in both Greater Portland Pulse and the Boston Indicators Project. Given the emphasis that this brief has placed on the relationship between segregation and "the just," particularly in relation to education policy, these would be valuable indicators to assess. Also notable are a series of measures in the STAR and Santa Monica indices regarding access to parks, trails, and community facilities. These enable a subtle indication of the degree to which a community has maximized its natural resources and recreational facilities, and, perhaps, even its openness to sustainability initiatives. Overall, there is clearly value in some of these indicators and in many of the indices that have been mentioned. In general, though, there is a tendency to see aspects of The Just and Well-Ordered in static terms and to ignore context and the historical dimensions of these issues.

Suggesting connections between The Just and Well-Ordered and other Endowments is far easier than evaluating existing metrics. Many such connections exist. One of the most obvious is "the good," as important if sometimes amorphous links exist between its institutions and practices and those in the "well-ordered" component of this Endowment brief. At their best, such efforts also strive to advance "the just," but it seems they have often proved inadequate to the task. This is particularly the case in terms of the widely held American belief that charitable and religious institutions can remedy deep societal inequities. While they do much that is good, charities and churches rarely can resolve underlying problems. During the Great Depression, many collapsed completely.

The Endowment of The True offers a particularly provocative connection in light of the "metropolitan revolution" idea that cities and metros are the locus of economic and cultural dynamism in the United States today. Universities, many of them located in cities, are often seen as particularly important drivers of postindustrial growth. Yet they often exist in tension with surrounding communities because the institutions of The True must be housed and serviced: In other words, "eds and meds" (i.e., universities and hospitals) frequently occupy physical and cultural spaces where people not associated with these institutions live and work. This creates the potential for displacement, gentrification, and neighborhood transformation as well as dynamism and growth. The True, it seems, cannot be pursued without attention to "the just." This becomes even clearer when the former is extended to include the broader context of educational inequality and its links to segregation and poverty and the apparent failure of recent reform movements to resolve these tensions at the level of K–12 (and pre–K) schooling.

The Endowment of The Beautiful offers connections particularly in the area of physical planning, but also in the relation of aesthetics to urban design and community life. This has implications for defining what the "well-ordered" means in practice, and The Beautiful and The Just and Well-Ordered must intersect in its production. Yet broad participation in constructing The Beautiful seems critical to achieving some semblance of "the just" through this process. Too narrow a focus on the aesthetic dimensions of The Beautiful has often proved problematic. Specifically, it can lead to the exclusion of low-income and minority groups in favor of elite cultural institutions and artists. Aesthetic concerns can also contribute to the conditions that lead to gentrification and displacement.

A wide range of critical connections exist between The Just and Well-Ordered and The Prosperous. These ties may be so extensive that proper and equitable functioning of The Prosperous can be seen as nearly a prerequisite to achievement of "the just." The "well-ordered" also relies, almost entirely, on the resources provided or created by the institutions and practices of The Prosperous. These ties are so close that much of the historical content of this Endowment brief might well have appeared in the brief on The Prosperous. In itself, though, The Prosperous alone remains insufficient. Without the moral and ethical guidance of The Just and Well-Ordered, The Prosperous may simply devolve into the imperatives, and morality, of market forces. This, of course, is exactly what critics of neoliberalism contend has taken place over the last quarter-century. This brief holds out more hope for maintaining, or perhaps restoring, an appropriate balance.
Finally, The Sustainable offers important but often overlooked connections in areas of environmental justice, which is highly related to segregation and inequality as well as deindustrialization. In a different vein, institutions such as the proliferating farmers' markets that now dot American cities have added a new dimension to regionalism, placing urban residents in a new and, we might say, better-ordered relationship to their wider ecological context. On a less positive note, low-income and minority neighborhoods have often struggled with problems of environmental injustice stemming from the proximate siting of industrial, commercial, and waste disposal facilities. All this suggests the degree to which neither "the well-ordered" nor "the just" can be separated from The Sustainable. The "well-ordered" cannot truly be achieved without attention to The Sustainable, and "the just" is often inextricably intertwined with it.

V. CONCLUSION

"Operationalizing" the Endowment of The Just and Well-Ordered will not be easy. It is a vast and complex Endowment that covers a huge range of human endeavor in urban environments. The jurisdictional and legal constraints on cities, not to mention the organic dimensions of "organized complexity" that are simply hard to plan for or even govern, all make effective, concerted action in this Endowment area particularly challenging. Yet questions of justice and government (or governance) remain central to achieving the overall ideal of the thriving city. Thriving, in this Endowment area, ultimately depends on a pragmatic embrace of what is workable in order to attain "the well-ordered." Yet "the just" must also be defined, before such a pragmatic solution can be devised. Otherwise, as this historically oriented brief has shown, there is a great likelihood that "the just" will actually be undermined by the pragmatism of "the well-ordered." This has happened repeatedly in American cities and metropolitan areas over the last century. History does not provide a guide to future choices, but the four points this brief has highlighted—about perspective, about the dangers of excessive faith in expertise, about the absence of blank slates, and about embracing the workable—will all help to prevent repetition of past errors, and, perhaps, even to honor Jane Jacobs's idea of organized complexity.

Over-reliance on expertise is one clear indication that this Endowment is not being fully realized. Some degree of expert knowledge and analysis is clearly necessary to the effective functioning of any urban place. In the past, however, it has led directly to problems such as the excesses of urban renewal. More generally, this Endowment is, in practical terms, usually strongly constrained both by the legacy of the historical patterns examined in this brief and by the broad legal limitations on the authority of cities. Pursuit of any form of justice requires careful attention to the way that segregation and poverty have shaped current realities—and the options available to leaders and to citizens, both poor and non-poor. Particularly critical in this regard is assessing how different groups within the larger community understand that history. Such an assessment does not readily lend itself to quantification, but it is a precondition to establishing a consensus around what thriving might in practice mean for a city, and how to achieve it. Resolving, or at the least acknowledging, such historically grounded questions of justice is thus a crucial step in the fulfillment of this Endowment, and of the potential of the Thriving Cities idea: A city cannot be well ordered in any real sense when deep, historically rooted injustices persist, especially if they go unacknowledged. In this sense, it might even be said that the entire project of pursuing "thriving" risks being thwarted unless the vexing problems of The Just and Well-Ordered are resolved or at the very least substantially mitigated.

The problem lies in the politics of this situation. Mechanisms to connect the interests of the poor and dispossessed with those of other citizens are not easily found. Even when they are, they may not be accepted by all who will need to enter into the relationship. This reflects in part the profound insecurity many people feel about their social and economic position, regardless of their possible status of relative advantage. This phenomenon appears especially acute in the aftermath of the Great Recession. The fear of losing what one already has can blind citizens to the larger gains that might be available from a community that is closer to an idea of The Just and the Well-Ordered. A community's capacity to at least manage tensions of this sort, whether through community groups, government, or social activism, may be an important marker for assessing the functioning of this Endowment.

One way to approach an assessment of The Just and Well-Ordered for specific communities may be to create a simple matrix that separates the "well-ordered" and "the just" and then examines points where they interact, as was done in Section III of this brief, "The Endowment in Context." This effort draws on many of the categories in the visual catalog of metrics compiled by the Thriving Cities Project, reorganizing some and adding others as needed. It is important to note that, ideally, none of these measures (whether for this Endowment or for others) should be considered as static; instead, changes over time should be measured whenever possible to determine whether we are moving toward or away from "thriving":

1. "The Well-Ordered"
    a. Basic elements of engagement: voting, participation in public meetings and community groups
    b. Provision of services: transportation, public health, basic social services, communications, water and sewer, fire and police protection
    c. Fiscal order: budget practices, bond ratings, tax levels, public perception of management quality, frequency of bond issues, capacity to service debt
    d. Strength of tax/economic base: reliance on different types of taxes (e.g., property, business, wage, "sin"), amount of revenue raised
    e. Age and maintenance of key components of public infrastructure (age easier to determine than level of maintenance)
    f. Age and quality of housing stock
    g. Availability of properties suitable for commercial or industrial uses
    h. Crime/safety: Multiple measures exist, drawing on both actual data and perceptions.
    i . Planning procedures: Do planning mechanisms exist? Are they followed? What values do plans reflect?
    j. Presence or absence of formal and informal structure to work with neighboring jurisdictions on shared problems

2. "The Just"
    a. Percentage of the population earning at least a living wage relative to local cost of living
    b. Racial and ethnic income differentials
    c. Development projects: who gains, who loses (the idea being to avoid the displacement problems of urban renewal)

d. Levels of housing segregation
e. Arrest and conviction rates by race and ethnicity
f. Percentage of children with incarcerated parent(s)
g. Access to basic and advanced health services
h. Access of all residents to locations of employment (the issue of "spatial mismatch")
i . Access to job training/retraining programs, employment experience or internships for students, in relation to the needs of local employers
j. Absence of food deserts (a possible overlap with the "well-ordered")
k. Educational levels in relation to housing patterns
l. Measures of pollution, especially in relation to residence by race and income level
m. Access to parks, recreational facilities, open space, etc., by neighborhood
n. Key Interactions in the Endowment of The Just and Well-Ordered
o. Opportunity measures for all citizens, particularly related to educational outcomes (i.e., the "opportunity gap" as well as the "achievement gap")
p. School attendance zones: How are they defined? How are they related to patterns of segregation?
q. Measures of trust: among community, of police (high priority for assessing effect of criminal justice system), of local government
r. Provisions for ensuring full participation in planning and development decisions (challenge: how to evaluate effectiveness of such mechanisms)
t. Systems and other supports for post-incarceration reintegration
u. "Cross-fertilization" among community organizations, government services, etc. (e.g., arts organizations and schools)
v. Levels of philanthropy, structures for oversight and coordination (Charlottesville Area Community Foundation as an example)
w. Public and community mechanisms for dispute and complaint resolution
x. Efficiency and responsiveness of government agencies
y. Perceptions of community connectedness

These are all highly specific measures. As such, they risk eroding a core message of this brief, which is that at the broadest level, the large task in assessing The Just and Well-Ordered in any community is to consider how we might address the remaining legacies of past injustices within the legal and jurisdictional constraints that cities inevitably face.[61] Most of the proposed measures capture just a small slice of that critical task. The return to vibrancy of many areas is promising, and presumably preferable to the alternative, but the continuance of old patterns of separation and inequality remains troubling. Understanding the roots of these patterns, and how they have undermined The Just and Well-Ordered as a whole, represents at least a place to begin.

NOTES

(Endnotes)

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